

CCC seeks hoops crown from NWAC

by Jack Spencer

It's March, basketball fans. We all know what that means: tournament season. That special time of year when college basketball prepares to crown a champion at all levels. Time to cheer on your favorite teams as they navigate their way through the tournament, hoping to avoid all the upset minded Cinderella teams that come out of the blue each and every year. That's just the magic of tournament season, the good and the bad.

The NWAC is the organization that overlooks Clackamas Community College along with 34 other teams. Starting March 7, the NWAC will put on its annual tournament, with the championship game on March 10. The NWAC is a relatively small organization in comparison with the NCAA with only 35 teams.

"We try our best to create a great experience for each of our student athletes," said Marco Azurdia, executive director of the NWAC.

This year, CCC hopes to experience the ultimate victory and bring home the NWAC tournament championship. The tournament will be held in Kennewick, Wash. at the Toyota Center. This year, the men's team finished with a record of 11-3 in Southern League play and ended up taking the regional championship after Chemeketa Community College had to forfeit all of their victories due to use of an ineligible player. The women finished with a 6-6 record in Southern League play and end up taking fifth place, leaving them just one spot out of a tournament bid.

Each year the NWAC takes the top four teams from each of its four divisions for the tournament. The

top four are selected based on their record in their respective divisions. Being in first place the men will have one of four No. 1 seeds in the tournament. The NWAC tournament follows your basic tournament layout with one little twist. Before the season, it select which divisions will be paired up when tournament time comes around. This year the Southern League will be paired up with the North. That means CCC will be playing Peninsula College, which took fourth place in the Northern League.

"We are the only team to play in every tournament since the year 2001," said head coach Clif Wegner.

The CCC men's team has had tremendous success in the tournament in the 15 years that

Wegner has been at the helm. Wegner's teams at CCC have made the tournament every season along with capturing three NWAC championships. This year's team hopes to make that four, especially with the way the tournament went last season.

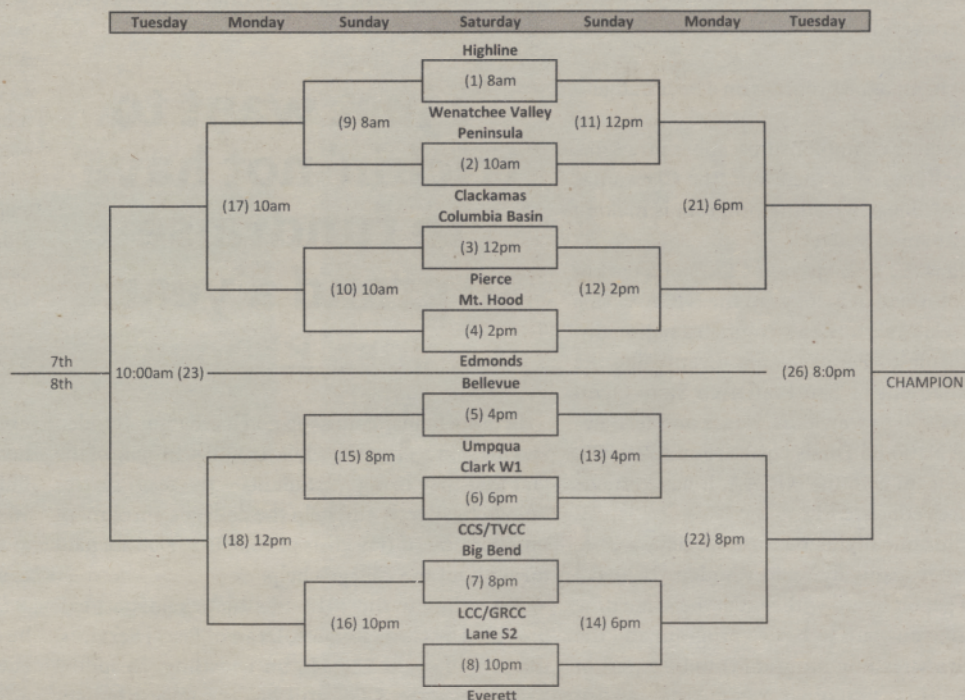
"That experience, being the league champion and going 0-2 in the tournament, really left us really hungry, with all our guys coming back to really do something different this year," said assistant coach Brian Stamme.

He seemed to have a great deal of confidence in the team going into the tournament this year, as he should. Finishing with a league title and winning seven of their last nine, the Cougars are not a team to be trifled with come March 7.

2015 NWAC MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Presented by Mission Support Alliance

March 7-10, 2015 | Toyota Center | Kennewick, WA



bracket contributed by the Northwest Athletic Conference

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The men's bracket for the NWAC basketball tournament shows the schedule of games in Kennewick, Wash. from March 7-10.